

# FELIX KARTHAGO

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The Vandal government of Roman Africa was an uneasy coalition. On the one hand the ruling clan of the Hasdingi took the helm of state. A polyglot elite of Vandals, Alans, Goths, Suevi, and Hispano-Romans supported the royal house. The Romano-Christian aristocracy, on the other hand, contributed magistrates, such as the proconsuls of Carthage, whose relation to the Vandal elite is unclear.<sup>1</sup> Ostrogothic Italy affords an analogy. The royal clan of the Amali shared power with Romano-Italian families of prominence, such as the Anicii and Cassiodori.<sup>2</sup>

For Ostrogoths, Vandals, and other Germanic groups perched on the Mediterranean littoral the danger of disappearing into Roman society was acute. How could these intruders, always a minority, maintain a separate identity in a Roman milieu? The Amali made a contribution toward survival by persuading Flavius Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus Senator, consul in A.D. 514, to write a history of the Goths. This work, composed in Latin, mixed classical and biblical commonplaces with what appear to be real traditions about the early Goths.<sup>3</sup>

Abbreviations not on the *DOP* list will be found at the end of this article, p. 15.

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<sup>1</sup>See the survey of F. M. Clover, "Carthage and the Vandals," *C Mich.*, VII (1982), 1–22.

<sup>2</sup>On the relations between the Amali and Italy's Roman aristocracy see, for instance, M. A. Wes, *Das Ende des Kaisertums im Westen des römischen Reichs* (The Hague, 1967), *passim*.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Jord. *Get.* 1–3; and J. J. O'Donnell, *Cassiodorus* (Berkeley, 1979), 43–54.

The mechanism that produced Cassiodorus' history—patronage of a Roman man of letters by Ostrogothic overlords—also existed in Vandal Africa. The Romano-African aristocrat Blossius Aemilius Dracontius addressed a panegyric to the Vandal King Thrasamund (*regn.* A.D. 496–523). The poets Luxorius, Felix, and Florentinus honored Thrasamund and his successor, Hildiric (*regn.* A.D. 523–30).<sup>4</sup> From Vandal sponsorship of African literati might have come a *Historia wandalorum*, an account which, like Cassiodorus' history, might have dealt with the northern European origins of the Vandals and the rise of the Hasdingi. Such a work never appeared. Instead, Christian diatribes against the intruder, particularly those originating from the Catholic faction, are the staple of the literary record of Vandal Africa. Victor of Vita's *Historia persecutionis africanae provinciae*, written during the reign of King Gunthamund (*regn.* A.D. 484–96), is the only surviving work that resembles a history of the Vandals.<sup>5</sup>

Polemic from the Catholic sector of African Christendom did not deter the Vandals from advertising their venture on the southern shores of the Mediterranean. From A.D. 439 until the arrival of Belisarius the Vandals controlled Carthage, the metropolis of Africa, and its hinterland. They brought the city's mint into full productivity, regulated the system by which they or their subjects dated public works, and managed to communicate some of their tastes to the poets and artists whom they patronized. The surviving fruits of these efforts—coins, dated funerary monuments, acts of sale, ecclesiastical tracts, poems, and mosaics—give the impression that the Vandals and the Romano-African elite stressed the might of the Hasdingi, to be sure, but placed equal or greater emphasis on

<sup>4</sup>See *PLRE*, II, 379–80, 462 (Felix 19), 476 (Florentinus 3), 695.

<sup>5</sup>On the date of Victor's history, see Clover, *C Mich.*, VII, 5 note 26. In general, see *PCBE*, I, 1175–76 (Victor 64).

the glory of Carthage. Four kinds of celebration of the metropolis require attention.

### I. THE PERSONIFICATION OF CARTHAGE

Before the Vandals seized Africa the early Tetrarchs were the principal superintendents of the mint of Carthage. Gold, silver, and bronze issues appeared between the start of Maximian's campaigns against the native Quinquegentiani (ca. A.D. 296) and his son Maxentius' suppression of the revolt of Lucius Domitius Alexander (A.D. 311). All minting authorities stressed in one way or another the greatness of Carthage. Maximian, for instance, produced an aureus whose reverse displayed a robed female figure standing with her head turned to the left and holding fruits in her outstretched hands (Fig. 1a). The legend FELIX KARTHAGO encircled this figure.<sup>6</sup> A rare gold issue of Lucius Domitius Alexander shows the same figure on the reverse and a more elaborate motto: INVICTA ROMA FEL(IX) KARTHAGO ("Fortunate is Carthage, so long as Rome is unconquered") (Fig. 1b).<sup>7</sup> The inscriptions on these two coins contribute to the identity of the standing female figure. She is the personification of Carthage, the metropolis of Africa.

A similar depiction evidently adorned a portion of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, an illustrated register of Roman imperial offices and military units edited for the last time between the early 390s and the first quarter of the fifth century. The work survives in late medieval copies (the most important of which are in Munich, Paris, and Oxford) of a lost ninth- or tenth-century manuscript of the Cathedral of Speyer, the *Codex spirensis*. In the late medieval manuscripts illustrations accompany the notices of magistracies and military units. A comparison of these pictures with works of art from late antiquity reveals discrepancies, but on the whole the depictions in the *Codex spirensis* seem to have been faithful to the originals.<sup>8</sup> The western section of the *Notitia* contained a summary of the proconsul of

Africa's administration. Above the record of the proconsul's *officium* appeared a representation in two registers of the magistrate's domain. The upper panel displayed the *codicilli*, the proconsul's document of appointment, on a cloth-covered table. To the left of the table stood a female figure facing frontally and stretching forth her hands. She held something in each hand, and her attire extended at least to her ankles. A nimbus may have encircled her head. It is difficult to be more precise than this regarding her posture, attire, and accoutrements, for the late medieval manuscripts present differing details. In general outline, however, the female figure on the coins of Tetrarchic Carthage and in the *Notitia* resemble one another. The *Notitia* itself provides further information about the lady's identity. She was, after all, part of a notice of the proconsul of Africa, who resided in Carthage. In addition, the lower panel of the illustration under discussion displayed two square-rigged transports, each laden with sacks of grain. Africa was one of Rome's chief granaries, and most African grain bound for Rome departed from Carthage. The female figure, therefore, was the personification of the great city (Fig. 2).<sup>9</sup>

During the Dominate the mint of Carthage helped to propagate the image of the city as bountiful patroness. Tetrarchic coins bearing the representation of Lady Carthage have already received attention. After the age of the Tetrarchs the city's mint experienced a brief revival in the early fifth century,<sup>10</sup> and then more extensive productivity under the Vandal and Byzantine authorities. The personification of Carthage appears on three Vandal series. The earliest of these was a briefly lived silver issue whose obverse displayed a diademed figure wearing a military cloak and cuirass and facing right. Western mints depicted emperors in this fashion. The obverse inscription identified the emperor in question as Honorius (A.D. 393–423): HONORIVS P(ERPETV)VS A(V)G(VS)T(VS) or HONORI- + -IVS A(V)G(VS)T(VS). On the reverse stood the now familiar female figure, more stocky than her Tetrarchic counterpart. She wore both robe and cloak and held shafts of grain in her outstretched hands. The reverse bore a date:

<sup>6</sup>See *RIC*, VI, 430, no. 46; and, in general, *RIC*, VI, 411–35.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. P. Salama, "Un follis d'Alexandre tyran conservé à Madrid," *Numario hispánico* 9 (1960), 171–77; *RIC*, VI, 433, no. 62. The same motto appears on a 3rd-century inscription of Rome: *CIL*, VI, 29850a.

<sup>8</sup>Among the basic studies are A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire, 284–602: A Social, Economic and Administrative Survey*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1964), III, 347–80; D. Hoffmann, *Das spät-römische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum*, 2 vols. (Düsseldorf, 1969–70), passim; and R. Goodburn and P. Bartholomew, eds., *Aspects of the Notitia Dignitatum* (Oxford, 1976), passim.

<sup>9</sup>On the interpretation of this illustration, see J. J. G. Alexander, "The Illustrated Manuscripts of the *Notitia Dignitatum*," in *Aspects of the Notitia Dignitatum*, 11–50, at 14; and P. Berger, *The Insignia of the Notitia Dignitatum* (New York, 1981), 99–102. On the proconsul's residence at Carthage and the status of the city in the early fifth century, see F. M. Clover, "Carthage in the Age of Augustine," *C Mich.*, IV (1978), 1–14.

<sup>10</sup>See Clover, *C Mich.*, IV, 9; and below, notes 108 and 116.

ANNO IIII K(ARTHAGINIS) or ANNO V + K(ARTHAGINIS) (Figs. 3a, 3b).<sup>11</sup> This peculiar method of dating was an invention of the Vandal kings. The series may date from the early 440s, soon after the Vandals captured Carthage.<sup>12</sup>

Beginning with King Gunthamund (A.D. 484–96) the later Vandal monarchs minted silver with their own name and titles, some of which they borrowed from imperial usage.<sup>13</sup> One of the issues of King Hildiric (A.D. 523–30) is the descendant of the coinage of Tetrarchic Carthage. The obverse showed the same type of bust that appeared on the dated coins minted in the name of Honorius. The inscription named the king with a mixture of imperial and royal titulature: D(OMINVS) N(OSTER) HILDIRIX REX. On the reverse stood Lady Carthage, her head perhaps crowned with foliage and her torso rendered as a rectangle. To identify the female figure Hildiric followed the example of Maximian: FELIX KART(HA)G(O) (Fig. 4).<sup>14</sup>

A third series—this one of bronze—also bore the standard badge of Carthage. The issue was without imperial or royal inscription. The curia of the city, with the approval of the Vandal kings, may have begun production around the beginning of the sixth century. The reverse bore the denominations N(VMMI) XLII, XXI, or XII. The facing female figure, normally on the reverse of Tetrarchic and Vandalic issues of Carthage, stood here on the obverse. In comparison with Hildiric's silver her figure was more rounded. She wore both robe and cloak and held in her outstretched hands shafts of grain. A wreath fastened by a circular ornament surrounded her (Fig. 5).<sup>15</sup>

Lady Carthage, then, adorned some of the currency minted during the Vandal century. The silver issues of Hildiric in particular show that the

Vandal elite sanctioned the common representation of the metropolis. With such official encouragement it is not surprising that the motif continued to be popular. Around the turn of the sixth century a Vandal or Roman dignitary included it in a large mosaic which perhaps stood in a private residence near the city's center. In the nineteenth century excavators found the mosaic on the southern flank of the Byrsa, Carthage's citadel. The Byrsa Mosaic, 8 m long by 5 m wide, consisted of a large field of interlacings with symmetrically aligned circular knots frequently inset with diamonds, crosses, or other designs. These features enclosed six rows, each containing five circular medallions. Five interstitial rows, made octagonal by the interlacings, separated the medallions. In the interstices and medallions the mosaicist placed a variety of figures and scenes. The top row of medallions displayed a robed woman flanked by two figures to her right and two to her left. The next (interstitial) row contained four charioteers, each named and perhaps representing the four teams: the Reds, Whites, Greens, and Blues. In the remaining interstices and medallions were hunting scenes. Today the entire mosaic is accessible from the design of the nineteenth-century excavators. Three fragments survive in the Louvre.<sup>16</sup>

One of the three remaining pieces of the mosaic is the circular medallion that stood in the center of the top row. The robed woman strikes a frontal pose. She stretches forth her arms and holds flowers and foliage in each hand. A crown of flowers decorates her hair, which is curled and drawn back. Behind her head stands a radiate nimbus. To her right and left, and still within the dark-bordered circle, are candles placed on candelabras, each with a tripod base (Fig. 6a). Who is this woman? In attempting to answer this question today's critic faces a problem analogous to that presented by the late medieval manuscripts of the *Notitia Dignitatum*. A modern mosaicist has retouched the medallion, so that certain details of the original depiction (for instance, the objects the lady held in her outstretched hands) are uncertain. Nevertheless, the general manner in which the artist depicted the woman is clear: she faced the viewer, she reached out her arms, and her attire extended at least to her ankles. Her attitude, then, resembles that of the figures discussed above. She is Lady Carthage.

<sup>11</sup> In general, see *BMC Vand.*, p. 5. To my knowledge the Museo Civico of Turin and the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin hold the only surviving examples dated by the fifth Year of Carthage. On both these coins a Cross Potent stands between *anno V* and *K(arthaginis)*. On the reading of the obverse inscription, see R. Guéry, "Notes de céramique," *Bulletin d'archéologie algérienne* 3 (1968), 271–81, at 279–81; contra C. Morisson, "Les origines du monnayage vandale," *Actes du 8ème Congrès International de Numismatique* (Paris-Basel, 1976), 461–72, at 468 note 29.

<sup>12</sup> See the Appendix below.

<sup>13</sup> See the discussion below, notes 58–63.

<sup>14</sup> See *BMC Vand.*, pp. 13–14.

<sup>15</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 6–7. For the curia of Carthage as the possible minting authority see P. Grierson, "The Tablettes Albertini and the Value of the Solidus in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries A.D.," *JRS* 49 (1959), 73–80, at 77–78. For the present consensus on the date of the large municipal bronzes of Carthage, see Morisson, "Origines," 461–72; and W. Hahn, *Moneta imperii byzantini*, 3 vols., *DenkWien, Philos.-hist.Kl.*, Bd. 109, 119, 148 (Vienna, 1973–81), I, 92–95 and III, 58–63.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. F. Baratte and N. Duval, *Catalogue des mosaïques romaines et paléochrétiennes du Musée du Louvre* (Paris, 1978), 76–78, nos. 38a–c.

The candles, common accoutrements of other ancient personifications of cities, lend support to the present interpretation.<sup>17</sup>

The identity of the woman in the centerpiece does not in itself establish the date of the Byrsa Mosaic. Indeed, the fragmentary condition and modern alterations hamper the effort to determine when the ancient mosaicist accomplished his work. Nevertheless, the other two fragments help the modern critic to locate an approximate time of composition. One of the remaining parts of the Byrsa Mosaic stood in the first full scene from the left in the third interstitial row from the top. The scene is incomplete, but it and the nineteenth-century design show a horse galloping to the right. Its rider wears a cloak, a short tunic with long sleeves, and long pants. He faces frontally, stretching his right arm over or near the horse's thigh (Fig. 6b). The distinctive pose of the rider finds a parallel in a hunting mosaic found in the Bordj-Djedid district of Carthage and now preserved in fragments in the British Museum. The fragments, once perhaps the adornment of a seaside villa in or near Carthage, show three horsemen, dogs pursuing a boar and a hare, two gazelles, and a bear.<sup>18</sup> One of the three horsemen wears a cloak, tunic, pants, leggings, and boots. He rides his horse to the right, beside a villa. Like the figure in the Byrsa Mosaic, he faces frontally and extends his right arm over or near the back of his horse (Fig. 7). The similarity of pose and indeed the general correspondence of hunting scenes in the Bordj-Djedid and Byrsa Mosaics raise the possibility of a common date of composition. Modern critics have placed the creation of the Bordj-Djedid Mosaic around the beginning of the sixth century.<sup>19</sup>

The Bordj-Djedid Mosaic celebrates the hunt. So does the Byrsa Mosaic, but this latter work also observes, in the first interstitial row from the top, the pleasures of the chariot races. The third Louvre fragment belongs to this row. The charioteer de-

picted—the second from the left, according to the nineteenth-century design—wears a helmet and cassock. He faces forward as he drives a quadriga. His horses (each reined, bridled, and bedecked with a palm branch) diverge, two galloping to his left and two to his right. A frontal plate adorns his chariot. His name appears in Latin characters to the right and left of his head: QVIR-IACVS (Fig. 6c).<sup>20</sup> For this fragment the parallel evidence, both literary and archeological, is more abundant, and it enables the modern critic to situate the Byrsa Mosaic more securely in the Vandal century. In recent years the University of Michigan's excavations at Carthage have unearthed a mosaic that once adorned a peristyle house located in the city's southeast sector. Among the many features of the mosaic were four charioteers, each named (in Greek rather than Latin characters) and each clearly representing the Blues, Whites, Greens, and Reds. On the basis of similar but not identical depictions of the charioteers, archeologists have dated the Mosaic of the House of the Greek Charioteers to the beginning of the fifth century and the Byrsa Mosaic to the end of the fifth or even the sixth century.<sup>21</sup> Some literary testimony offers support for this chronology. The *Latin Anthology*, a collection of Latin poems evidently gathered at Carthage between A.D. 523 and 535, contains short pieces by classical Latin authors such as Martial and verses by perhaps ten Roman men of letters flourishing at Carthage around the end of the Vandal century. The anthology survives primarily in *Codex parisinus latinus 10318*, an eighth-century manuscript most frequently called the *Codex salmasianus* after its onetime possessor, the seventeenth-century philologist Claude de Saumaise. One of the Latin poets living in Vandal Carthage was Luxorius. Among the several poems attributed to him is a set of five elegiac couplets addressed to an aged charioteer who habitually loses and then taunts the jeering crowd. The obvious setting of this piece is the Circus of Carthage. In the first verse Luxorius addresses the charioteer in the vocative case. The *Codex salmasianus*, the lone manuscript for this poem, reads his name as follows: *Quiriace*.<sup>22</sup> Luxorius knew of a

<sup>17</sup>Cf. P. Gauckler, "La personnification de Carthage: Mosaïque du Musée du Louvre," *Mémoires de la Société Nationale des Antiquaires de France* 63 (1904), 165–78; and J. Salomonson, "Kunstgeschichtliche und ikonographische Untersuchungen zu einem Tonfragment der Sammlung Benaki in Athen," *BABesch* 48 (1973), 3–82, at 64–71.

<sup>18</sup>Cf. R. P. Hinks, *Catalogue of the Greek, Etruscan and Roman Paintings and Mosaics in the British Museum* (London, 1933), 144–48, no. 57.

<sup>19</sup>Cf. K. M. D. Dunbabin, *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa: Studies in Iconography and Patronage* (Oxford, 1978), 59, 62, and 250; and idem, "A Mosaic Workshop in Carthage around A.D. 400," *New Light on Ancient Carthage*, ed. J. G. Pedley (Ann Arbor, 1980), 73–83.

<sup>20</sup>For the reading of the inscription I follow Baratte and Duval, *Catalogue*, 77, no. 38a; *contra* CIL, VIII, 10539, which reads CVIR-IACVS.

<sup>21</sup>Cf. K. M. D. Dunbabin, "The Victorious Charioteer on Mosaics and Related Monuments," *AJA* 86 (1982), 65–89, at 75.

<sup>22</sup>AL 301. At verse 1 Bailey (*AL*, p. 248, *ad loc.*), following a previous editor, makes a needless emendation: *Cyriace*. On the *Latin Anthology* in general, see Clover, *C Mich.*, VII, 5–6, 20–22; and Averil Cameron, "Byzantine Africa: The Literary Evidence," *ibid.*, 29–62, at 30–31.



charioteer named Quiriacus. One of the drivers on the Byrsa Mosaic bore the same name. A Quiriacus may have been a prominent figure in the Circus at Carthage during the last generation of Vandal rule.

The Byrsa Mosaic, a celebration of the circus races and the hunt, stands near in time to the reign of King Hildiric, who placed the personification of Carthage on some of his silver coins. The artisan who made the large town house mosaic also gave prominence to the same figure by placing her in the center of the top row. A modern critic has identified her four companions—once again, two appear on either side of her—as the Four Seasons.<sup>23</sup> If one accepts this interpretation, the message of the Byrsa Mosaic becomes clear: the viewer is invited to contemplate the pleasures and diversions that Carthage and her immediate surroundings offer residents and visitors the year round. During the Vandal century Lady Carthage, it seems, symbolized the fertile heartland of Africa and the delights of its metropolis.

## II. THE REVIVAL OF PHOENICIAN BADGES OF CARTHAGE

Under Vandal supervision the mint of Carthage utilized a coin type, the personification of Carthage, which originated in the age of the Tetrarchs. At the same time the mint employed other motifs of greater antiquity. Before the Romans occupied Africa, the Phoenician masters of Carthage and the southwestern Mediterranean had placed various badges of the great city on their coinage. The two most common symbols were the horse's head and the palm tree. Both emblems were celebrations of the might of Tanit and Baal Hammon, lunar and solar deities who were prominent in the Phoenician pantheon and advertisements of legends associating the foundation of Carthage with the excavation of a horse's head, which some ancient versions located at the base of a palm tree.<sup>24</sup> Three gold and silver issues will show some of the ways in which the Carthaginians drew attention to their heritage. A gold quarter displays a head of Tanit on the obverse and a palm tree with fruits on the reverse (Fig. 8a).<sup>25</sup> A Siculo-Punic silver tetradrachm of the fourth century B.C. also bears on its

obverse a Tanit head facing left. The accoutrements of the goddess (plaited hair, necklace, and pendant earrings) and the dolphins surrounding her demonstrate that the Carthaginians of Sicily borrowed from Syracuse, which depicted the goddess Arethusa in the same manner. The reverse shows a horse's head facing left and, immediately to the right of the horse's mane, a miniature palm tree (Fig. 8b).<sup>26</sup> A contemporary Siculo-Punic tetradrachm shows a Tanit head facing right. The dolphins are rendered more schematically, and sprigs of wheat appear in the goddess' hair. On the reverse a horse stands facing right, in front of a full-scale palm tree with fruits. To the right of the horse is a caduceus (a solar symbol) (Fig. 8c).<sup>27</sup>

When the Romans came to Africa they inherited and developed further the urban civilization of the Phoenicians. It was to be expected that some Phoenician attitudes would persist in altered form under the Roman administration. Tanit, for instance, became Caelestis ("The Heavenly Goddess"), and as her popularity spread beyond Africa the Romans came to regard her as a manifestation of Juno. One can recognize in Juno Caelestis, who fostered the fertility of Africa's crops, the precursor of the late antique Lady Carthage.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, the sprigs of wheat in the hair of Phoenician Tanit are the remote ancestor of the shafts of grain in Lady Carthage's outstretched hands (cf. Figs. 4 and 8c). Not all Phoenician symbolism, however, came to late Roman Africa in the same direct fashion. The horse, horse's head, and palm tree also survived the Roman occupation, but their meaning underwent significant alteration. Some western Roman bronze lamps, for instance, bore handles in the shape of a horse's head. Two examples in the British Museum are perhaps of Italian origin (Figs. 9a, 9b).<sup>29</sup> But excavators have found lamps of this sort on African soil, and local terra-cotta adaptations of this lamp style have turned up especially in the Mauretanian part of Africa.<sup>30</sup> The palm tree

<sup>26</sup> See *ibid.*, 128, no. 27.

<sup>27</sup> See *ibid.*, 128, no. 18. On the significance of the caduceus, see Ferron, "Caractère," 50–52.

<sup>28</sup> See again Gauckler, "Personnification," 165–78.

<sup>29</sup> See H. B. Walters, *Catalogue of the Greek and Roman Lamps in the British Museum* (London, 1914), nos. 85 and 95. I take the liberty of quoting a portion of a letter that Dr. Susan Walker of the British Museum sent to me on 6 February 1985: "Lamp 85 was collected by Charles Townley and 95 was obtained from the collector Sir William Hamilton. It is likely, but not proven, that both lamps come from Italy."

<sup>30</sup> Cf. R. Thouvenot, "Lampes en bronze," *Publications du Service des Antiquités du Maroc* 10 (1954), 217–26; and J. Bussièrre, "Note sur la datation d'une lampe à tête de cheval trouvée à Renault (Oranie)," *Antiquités africaines* 3 (1969), 237–42.

<sup>23</sup> See Fig. 6a; and Gauckler, "Personnification," 170–71.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. J. Bayet, "L'omen du cheval à Carthage: Timée, Virgile et le monnayage punique," *Mélanges de littérature latine*, ed. J. Bayet (Rome, 1967), 255–80 (esp. 256); and J. Ferron, "Le caractère solaire du dieu de Carthage," *Africa* 1 (1966), 41–63.

<sup>25</sup> See G. K. Jenkins and R. B. Lewis, *Carthaginian Gold and Electrum Coins* (London, 1963), 88, no. 117.

was also a common decoration on African lamps, especially during the late stages of the Roman occupation. The Bardo Museum in Tunis and the National Museum of Carthage contain several specimens of local provenance. One example, found in the Damous el Karita district of Carthage, will suffice: a terra-cotta lamp whose top displays a seven-branch palm tree encased in a ring of spirals and cross-shaped knots (Fig. 10).<sup>31</sup> The presence of the palm tree and the horse on lamps of Roman Africa is guarantee enough that the Phoenician meaning of these symbols did not persist. Instead of signifying the origins of Africa's metropolis, these motifs became a household banality.

Yet the same figures could take on a different significance in other contexts. The same houses that contained lamps of the sort described here might also have mosaics on which horses and palm trees appeared, and these often bespoke a major preoccupation of Africa's Romans. A great mosaic discovered at Hadrumetum (Sousse) is the best example. Fragments in the National Museum of Sousse and modern drawings reveal two rectangular pavements, the first of which depicted medallions at each corner and a pastoral scene at the center. In each medallion stood two horses, each pair facing a fruited palm tree and bedecked with a palm branch. In each instance the horse's name appeared above its back. The second pavement also displayed a pastoral centerpiece and horses at the four corners. Here, however, only four horses, each confronting a palm tree and wearing a palm branch, bordered the landscape. The name of each horse flanked the palm tree. An Eros flew over each horse, ready to crown it with garlands. This Mosaic of the House of Sorothus (so named because the owner's name appears on the flanks of some horses) dates from the early third century A.D. The palm branches, garlands, horses' names, and owner's brand all proclaim Sorothus' occupation: this local dignitary raised horses for the circus races.<sup>32</sup> Public entertainment was an important dimension of life in Roman Africa. Other African mosaics composed between the second and the fourth centuries depict circus horses. The fourth-century mosaic of Carthage's *Maison des Chevaux*, for instance, contains a veritable gallery of horses, charioteers, and circus attendants.<sup>33</sup> The Mosaic of the House

of Sorothus, however, best exemplifies the Roman juxtaposition of the horse and the palm. The distant ancestor of these features is the horse-and-palm motif on the Siculo-Punic tetradrachms. But on this and similar mosaics Roman life thrust aside the original meaning of these symbols and instead brought to the viewer's mind the world of entertainment.

Four charioteers occupied a prominent place on the Byrsa Mosaic. The circus races were still a major preoccupation for the inhabitants of Vandal Carthage.<sup>34</sup> The horse motif also appears on bronze currency minted at Carthage during the Vandal century, but in this instance the symbol's meaning is in doubt. One series of large bronzes—municipals produced by the curia of Carthage with royal consent—has already received attention: Lady Carthage adorned the obverse.<sup>35</sup> Around the same time (again, the turn of the sixth century) the curia inaugurated under the Vandal king's auspices another bronze series. This one bears a standing warrior on the obverse. Attired in cuirass and military cloak, the warrior relaxes his right arm and rests a long spear on the ground with his left. The legend KART-HAGO flanks him on the left and right. The exergue of the reverse displays the denominations XLII, XXI, or XII, but here (in contrast to the Lady Carthage Series) the clarifying N(VMMI) is absent. Above the reverse exergue is a bridled horse's head, facing left (Figs. 11a, 11b).<sup>36</sup> The modern critic will recognize in this representation a latter-day version of the left-facing horse's head on the reverses of some Siculo-Punic tetradrachms.<sup>37</sup> But what did this motif mean to the Romans who sat on the curia of Vandal Carthage? The standing warrior presents no problem. He is an imitation of a standing emperor in military dress—a common feature on western Roman coinage of the fifth century.<sup>38</sup> But what of the horse's head? Among the early Germanic peoples a horse's head fixed on a pole served as an announcement of future victory, an effort to deprive adversaries of their fighting spirit before battle. Did the Standing Warrior Series celebrate present and future victory for the Hasdingi? Did the Hasdingi manage to introduce some of their ancestral heritage into the culture of Roman Car-

<sup>31</sup> Cf. A. Ennabli, *Lampes chrétiennes de Tunisie* (Paris, 1976), 162–74, nos. 762–76. An illustration of no. 771 appears in Fig. 10.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Dunbabin, *Mosaics of Roman North Africa*, 93–94 and 270, no. 13.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 95–96 and 252–53, no. 33.

<sup>34</sup> See above, notes 20–23.

<sup>35</sup> See above, note 15.

<sup>36</sup> See *BMC Vand.*, pp. 3–4. On the minting authority and approximate date of this series, see above, note 15.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Fig. 8b with Figs. 11a and 11b.

<sup>38</sup> See, for example, A. S. Robertson, *Roman Imperial Coins in the Hunter Coin Cabinet*, University of Glasgow, 5 vols. (Oxford, 1962–82), V, 439 no. 20, 451 no. 1, and 462 no. 1.

thage?<sup>39</sup> Two considerations point toward negative answers to these questions. First of all, the Standing Warrior Series is a municipal issue and as such celebrates the grandeur of Carthage. The obverse legend, KARTHAGO, performs the same function as the personification of Carthage in the Lady Carthage Series.<sup>40</sup> Second, other bronze coins of late Roman, Vandal, or Byzantine Carthage display a horse's head with other symbols, and these enable the modern observer to approach an understanding of Phoenician motifs in a late Roman context.

In late antiquity Africa produced a maze of anonymous bronze minimi. The most common varieties bore obverses and reverses borrowed from imperial issues; a Winged Victory was a favorite reverse type.<sup>41</sup> Early in this century the influential British Museum catalogue tentatively assigned many of these bronzes to the Vandal century.<sup>42</sup> More recent critics have found that this labyrinth of "Vandalic" currency contains pieces of late antique date to be sure, but of imperial, African, Egyptian, and uncertain provenance.<sup>43</sup> The modern observer who singles out specimens from this pile of small change must be prepared to show that the pieces held up for inspection originated in Vandal Carthage.

The present problem brings to view two coins whose origins are less certain than those of the Standing Warrior Series. In Copenhagen's Royal Collection of Coins and Medals there is a small bronze whose obverse carries a diademed figure (without identifying inscription) in military attire facing right. To the left stands a Cross Potent. The reverse shows an unbridled horse's head facing right (Fig. 12a).<sup>44</sup> The mint of Carthage probably produced this piece: recent excavations have unearthed a similar specimen in the city's southeast quarter.<sup>45</sup> But what authority caused this type to be produced? The texture and size are similar to those

of bronze minimi which Vandal authorities produced in quantity.<sup>46</sup> The Standing Warrior Series is proof that some bronze currency minted during the Vandal occupation bore a horse's head on the reverse. King Hildiric issued small bronzes that utilized the Cross Potent (Fig. 12b). The small bronze type under discussion may therefore date from the Vandal century. In any case, the intrusion of a standard imperial obverse carries the horse's head another step away from the Germanic heritage and places it in the milieu of late Roman, Vandal, and Byzantine Carthage.<sup>47</sup>

The second piece, part of the great collection that now resides in Turin's Civic Museum, is an enigma. It is a medium-sized bronze—its module is 20 mm—weighing about 7 g. An unbridled horse's head, facing right, adorns its obverse. On the reverse appears a palm tree with fruits. The coin bears no identifying inscription (Fig. 13). Some of its basic characteristics—a die axis that verges upon 90° and the absence of centered obverse and reverse images—enable the modern observer to assign it to the mint of Carthage. The size of the piece resembles that of the 21-nummi issues of the Standing Warrior Series, which also bears a horse's head.<sup>48</sup> On the strength of this consideration one can suggest, but not prove, that the specimen dates from the Vandal century. It is safer to state that moneyers of Carthage issued it around the fifth or sixth century.<sup>49</sup>

In late antiquity the mint of Carthage occasionally struck coins that juxtaposed the horse's head and the palm tree. Under the auspices of the Vandal kings the city's curia issued a large bronze series whose reverse displayed the horse's head. Such images last appeared on Carthaginian coinage in the fourth century B.C. What did they mean to the inhabitants of late Roman, Vandal, and Byzantine Carthage? The palm trees and horses on Roman

<sup>39</sup>Cf. T. L. Markey, "Nordic *Nidhvi*sur: An Instance of Ritual Inversion?" *Studies in Medieval Culture* 10 (1977), 75–85. Professor Markey brought this possibility to my attention.

<sup>40</sup>See above, note 15.

<sup>41</sup>See, for example, J. Lafaurie, "Trésor de monnaies de cuivre trouvé à Sidi Aïch (Tunisie)," *RN*, ser. 6, 2 (1959–60), 113–30.

<sup>42</sup>Cf. *BMC Vand.*, pp. 17–42.

<sup>43</sup>See, for example, J. G. Milne, "The Currency of Egypt in the Fifth Century," *Numismatic Chronicle*, ser. 5, 6 (1926), 43–92.

<sup>44</sup>See C. J. Thomsen, *Catalogue de la collection de monnaies de feu Christian Jürgensen Thomsen*, 7 vols. (Copenhagen, 1866–76), II, 89 no. 1068; J. Friedländer, *Die Münzen der Vandalen* (Leipzig, 1849), 40.

<sup>45</sup>Cf. T. V. Buttrey, "The Coins," *C Mich.*, I (1976), 157–97, at 166–97, no. 120.

<sup>46</sup>Thrasamund, for example, ordered some of the Victory minimi noted above (notes 41–42) struck in his name. Cf. *Sammlung Consul Eduard Friedrich Weber, Hamburg*, 2 vols. (Munich, 1908–9), II, 220, no. 3071 (now in Munich's Staatliche Münzsammlung, accession no. 27675); and M. Troussel, "Les monnaies vandales d'Afrique: Découvertes de Bou-Lilate et du Hamma," *Recueil des notices et mémoires de la Société Archéologique, Historique et Géographique du Département de Constantine*, 67 (1950–51), 147–92, at 172–87.

<sup>47</sup>On Hildiric's bronzes with the Cross Potent, see *BMC Vand.*, p. 14, nos. 9–10.

<sup>48</sup>Cf. Figs. 11b and 13.

<sup>49</sup>For bronze minimi with similar or identical obverses and reverses, see Friedländer, *Münzen der Vandalen*, 40; and *BMC Vand.*, pp. 26–27, nos. 68–72. For recent reflections on the dating of the palm tree nummi, see W. E. Metcalf, "The Coins—1978," *C Mich.*, VII (1982), 63–168, at 64–67 and 150–52, at no. 413.

imperial lamps and mosaics are warning enough that these symbols no longer commemorated the might of Tanit, protectress of the great Phoenician city-state. Yet it would be wrong to suggest that an inhabitant of fifth- or sixth-century Carthage would look at a Standing Warrior reverse and see in the horse's head depicted there a celebration of the circus races. During the Vandal century both kings and curia put Lady Carthage, a municipal badge, on some of the coins of Africa's metropolis. The horse's head, it seems, also advertised the city's greatness. The use of a Phoenician symbol with an approximation of the original meaning is, on reflection, not surprising. In the late fifth or early sixth century another curia, the Senate of Rome, issued with the approval of Odovacar or the Ostrogoths a series of large bronzes in denominations of 40 and 20 nummi. The obverse and reverse bore a bust of Roma and the traditional Wolf and Twins (Fig. 14). The Lady Carthage, Standing Warrior, and Wolf and Twins Series are contemporary. Their emblems are expressions of municipal pride. They reflect the eastward contraction of Roman imperial authority and the consequent increase in the stature of the great cities of the western Mediterranean.<sup>50</sup>

### III. THE YEAR OF CARTHAGE

Ostraka discovered near Bir Trough, Algeria, demonstrate that during the reign of King Gunthamund (A.D. 484–96) the formula for dating by regnal year included the element “in the year N of Carthage.” This convention also appears on silver coins of Carthage that have already received attention. They bear an obverse in the name of Emperor Honorius, and Lady Carthage adorns the reverse. The reverse also shows that the minting authority released the series in the fourth and fifth Years of Carthage. In addition to this silver issue there are five epitaphs—four from Africa Proconsularis and one from Numidia—that record deaths in the sixth, seventh, twentieth, and twenty-fourth Years of Carthage. The Bir Trough ostraka make Gunthamund's reign a focal point of this method of dating. Other considerations make it likely, but

not certain, that the formula originated early in Geiseric's kingship (439–77), soon after the Vandals captured Carthage. In any case, the insertion of the name of Carthage into a regnal formula means that the Vandal kings sought to link their own power and the stature of Carthage. The Year of Carthage is another Vandal celebration of the great metropolis of Africa.<sup>51</sup>

### IV. ANTHOLOGIA LATINA 371

The collection of Latin poetry known as the *Latin Anthology* has already received notice. Poets such as Florentinus, Felix, and Luxorius flourished at Carthage toward the end of the Vandal century and wrote verses that drew some of their inspiration from the classical past but also reflected contemporary life. Among their sponsors were the Vandal kings, other Hasding clansmen, and Vandal nobles who did not belong to the royal family. These patrons frequently persuaded their hired versifiers to celebrate the pleasures one could encounter in their private dwellings or in baths that they had constructed.<sup>52</sup> A certain Fridamal, for instance, built a tower in the midst of a garden and then ordered a painting depicting him at the hunt to be placed in the tower. Luxorius wrote a poem saluting the painting.<sup>53</sup> King Thrasamund, to take another example, constructed baths equipped with hypocausts in a seaside suburb of Carthage called *Al-ianae*. Felix evidently sought to compose the dedicatory inscription for the baths. He gave Thrasamund, it seems, a choice of five dedications: three in elegiac couplets and two in hexameters (the last with acrostics).<sup>54</sup>

Yet the Latin poets who celebrated the pleasures of Vandal Carthage also stood ready to proclaim state policy. The kings therefore had at their disposal not only coinage and public documents but also court poetry as a means of advertising their venture in Roman Africa. Of all the verses written at Carthage during the Vandal century, the hexameter poem attributed to Florentinus in the *Codex salmasianus* comes closest to a general statement of Vandal goals and aspirations.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>50</sup>On the Wolf and Twins Series see F. Kraus, *Die Münzen Odovacars und des Ostgotenreiches in Italien* (Halle, 1928), 219–21; A. Chastagnol, *Le Sénat romain sous le règne d'Odacre: Recherches sur l'épigraphie du Colisée au Ve siècle* (Bonn, 1966), 52–56. For the importance of Rome and Carthage in late antiquity see A. Audollent, *Carthage romaine, 146 avant Jésus-Christ–698 après Jésus-Christ* (Paris, 1901), 67–142; and R. Krauthheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City, 312–1308* (Princeton, 1980), 3–87.

<sup>51</sup>On the silver coins minted in the name of Honorius, see above, note 11. It is difficult to separate the year-N-of-Carthage formula from other methods of dating employed by the Vandal kings. Consequently, I have placed a discussion of the Vandals' systems of regnal dating in the Appendix to this paper.

<sup>52</sup>See above, note 22.

<sup>53</sup>AL 299.

<sup>54</sup>AL 201–205.

<sup>55</sup>With one exception (see below, note 67) I have followed Bailey's text of AL 371 (pp. 286–88).

I will praise the royal celebrations made festive by yearly vows. The imperial splendor of Thrasamund, ruler of Libya, is the world's renown—just as the sun, glittering more brightly than the entire radiate universe, stands forth above all the stars.[5] Reverence and foresight converge in this man, as do good character, bravery, handsome appearance, distinction, spirit, vigorous education, and a very adroit intelligence that watches over everything.

But why do I tarry further? Or why betake myself to a side path? Thrasamund alone has everything that is highly regarded in the whole earth's circuit. [10] Parthia glitters brilliantly with so many precious stones. Lydia's Pactolus furrows so many ruddy sands. The Silk People dye so many fleeces of changing color, granting by their precious garment—all vestments which blaze forth when purple dye is added—rewards to deserving rulers. [15] Africa pours forth profusely the fruits of the illustrious olive tree. The earth's produce—all that earns praise throughout the world—has entered your realm. The Creator on high has granted and allowed you alone to possess all these things.

With you as king the citadel of Carthage shines forth steadily. [20] Her offspring Alianae follows her with uneven step, her equal in esteem and distinction. The ruler's love for her caught fire most brightly. He built her, famous for her lovely site and her robust breezes. She deserved to bear the step of a deserving ruler. [25] Here the channel resounds beneath the marble-smooth swirl of the sea. Here the earth's riches rise up from the verdant soil, so that Our Master might enjoy the magnificence of land and sea.

Carthage, yes Carthage, retains her reputation by her summits and by her king. Carthage the victress—[30] Carthage, the mother-city to the Hasdingi—triumphs. Carthage glitters. In all of Libya's lands Carthage, yes Carthage, is eminent. Carthage is adorned with learning. Carthage is embellished with teachers. Carthage is rich in peoples. Carthage is radiant. Carthage is well-endowed with houses. Carthage abounds with walls. [35] Carthage is savory. Carthage is nectar-sweet. Carthage flourishes, ruling in the name of Thrasamund. So that her empire might remain fortunate throughout the ages, we desire to observe yearly festivals for Our Master for many years, while he seeks anew the illustrious celebrations of his rule.

The ancient editors of the *Latin Anthology* correctly regarded these hexameters as a salute to royalty.<sup>56</sup> King Thrasamund (mentioned by name in verses 2 and 36) was the object of the praises that Florentinus composed in the classical idiom. There is only a hint (at lines 17 and 18) that Florentinus was a Christian.<sup>57</sup> Since the reign of Gun-

thamund the Vandal rulers had appropriated some imperial titles in addition to the kingship they had held since the capture of Carthage. Florentinus was careful to note the "imperial splendor" (see verse 2) of Thrasamund. In lines 27 and 38 he spoke of Thrasamund as *dominus*; beginning with Gunthamund all Vandal kings adopted the title *dominus noster*.<sup>58</sup> Annual vows and celebrations figure prominently at the beginning and end of the poem.<sup>59</sup> Here Florentinus was referring to the Vandal adaptation of the imperial *vota*, celebrations (most noticeable at five- or ten-year intervals) of the beginning date of an emperor's reign.<sup>60</sup> Neither Florentinus nor any other Latin poet who speaks about the regnal festivities of the Vandals indicates that the Vandal monarchs staged special observances every fifth year. The annual commemorations all seem to have been of equal intensity.<sup>61</sup> Finally, Florentinus (at lines 5 through 7) enumerated the many virtues of King Thrasamund. Of these *pietas*—traditional reverence or dutiful respect toward the divine, one's fatherland, and one's family<sup>62</sup>—was the most imperial. During the Dominate the obverses of Roman solidi, for instance, commonly gave the emperors the titles *Dominus Noster* and *Augustus* and characterized them as reverent (*pius*) and fortunate (*felix*). Florentinus and other Latin poets who saluted the dutiful respect of Vandal kings were seeking to place these monarchs near in spirit to the emperors.<sup>63</sup>

Florentinus, then, composed a laudation that was the embryo of an imperial panegyric. A more explicit catalogue of Thrasamund's virtues, an account of his ancestry, a narration of his deeds in war and peace, and a more robust peroration on the future glories of his reign would have made the poem similar in content to Sidonius Apollinaris' hexameters in honor of Emperors Avitus,

<sup>58</sup>Cf. *Drac. Sat.* 107–112 et passim; and *BMC Vand.*, pp. 8–15.

<sup>59</sup>*AL* 371.1, 37–39.

<sup>60</sup>Cf. A. A. Boyce, *Festal and Dated Coins of the Roman Empire: Four Papers*, Numismatic Notes and Monographs, 153 (New York, 1965), 40–90.

<sup>61</sup>Cf. *AL* 201.7–8 (Felix); and *Drac. Sat.* 45–52.

<sup>62</sup>Cf. T. Ulrich, *Pietas (pius) als politischer Begriff im römischen Staate bis zum Tode des Kaisers Commodus*, Historische Untersuchungen, 6 (Breslau, 1930), passim; and H. D. Weiss, *Pietas in Latin Writers in Early Christian Times*, Diss. (Duke University, 1964), passim.

<sup>63</sup>For a similar use of the concept of *pietas*, see *Drac. Sat.* 109–112 et passim. For a general discussion of the Vandal kings' mixture of their own and imperial titles, see H. Wolfram et al., *Intitulatio*, 2 vols., *MIÖG*, Ergänzungsbände 21, 24 (Vienna, 1967–73), I, 76–89.

<sup>56</sup>The *Codex salmasianus*' superscript: "hi sunt uersus a florentino in laude(m) regis facto (Claude de Saumaise: *facti*). Cf. Bailey, *AL*, p. 286, ad loc.

<sup>57</sup>Blossius Aemilius Dracontius, a contemporary of Florentinus and a Christian, used classical characterizations similar to those of *AL* 371.17–18 to describe the God of the Christians in his *Satisfactio* to King Gunthamund (cf. vss. 55–92 et passim).

Majorian, and Anthemius.<sup>64</sup> Instead of developing further the theme of Thrasamund's imperial qualities, however, Florentinus introduced into his *In Praise of the King* another kind of encomium, the distant (and superior) ancestor of which was the *laudes Italiae*, the centerpiece of Vergil's *Georgics*, Book Two. There the master had thrust aside the produce for which other regions were famous and had proclaimed Italy to be without rival in land, water, flora, fauna, and peoples.<sup>65</sup> In verses 8 through 18 Florentinus began to speak like Vergil as he enumerated the world's wealth which flowed by trade into Thrasamund's Africa. Further reflection on Africa's fertility (beyond a spare notice of her olive trees, for which she was famous) might have produced a *laudes Africae*.<sup>66</sup> Instead Florentinus turned aside and concluded his poem (lines 19 through 39) with a *laudatio Carthaginiis*. In this section Carthage's "daughter," the suburb Alianae, first claimed the poet's attention. His notice of Thrasamund's construction there is less specific than the verses of Felix, who describes Thrasamund's baths in detail. On the other hand, Florentinus is more specific about the setting; references to a channel and the juxtaposition of fertile land and swirling sea bring to mind the shoreline north of Carthage, between today's Sidi Bou Saïd and Gammarth.<sup>67</sup> After this salute to an offspring of Carthage, however, Florentinus brought to view the metropolis herself. Carthage was the city of lofty summits, stately houses, walls, teachers, and advanced instruction. Florentinus here referred to the Byrsa (the site of the king's palace); the so-called Hill of Juno; the town houses and suburban villas (of which other poets of the *Latin Anthology* and, recently, archeologists have taken notice); the landward fortifications which the Roman authorities had constructed and the Vandal kings maintained; and the climate of learning which persisted (albeit in diminished form) after the Age of Augustine.<sup>68</sup> Yet even as he praised Carthage, Florentinus associated the fortune of the city with that of the Van-

dal king. Carthage, he proclaimed, was mother to the Hasdingi, and the continued celebrations of Thrasamund's regnal year were the guarantee that Carthage's "empire" would continue to prosper.<sup>69</sup> One might say that Florentinus took the familiar motto that Thrasamund's successor, Hildiric, placed on his silver coinage (FELIX KARTHAGO) and added a proviso:<sup>70</sup> Carthage is fortunate indeed, so long as the Hasdingi are unconquered.

A salute to a king which became a *laudatio Carthaginiis*, the introduction of the Year of Carthage into regnal formulae, and the use of Phoenician and Tetrarchic badges of the city on currency place the Vandals' venture in Africa some distance away from other Germanic sojourns on the Mediterranean coast—for example, that of the Ostrogoths in Italy. In all the sources for Vandal Africa there is not a hint of the kind of apology that Cassiodorus wrote for the royal house of the Amali. The abiding presence of Carthage in officially sanctioned advertisements of Vandal greatness is a measure of the influence of Roman civilization and Roman Africa's provincial elite during the Vandal century.

## APPENDIX

### The Regnal Year of the Vandals

In A.D. 537 Emperor Justinian I ordered all official documents to be dated by the years of his reign, the beginning of which he marked (according to present-day reckoning) at 1 April 527, and by consulates and indictions.<sup>71</sup> At the end of the last century Theodor Mommsen sought the origin of this practice in part in Roman usage and partly in the adoption of regnal years by Germanic peoples. The Vandals were among the first to use regnal years. Mommsen argued that soon after he captured Carthage Geiseric ordered time to be measured from the beginning of his kingship, which he set at 19 October 439, the day of the city's capture.<sup>72</sup> Literary, epigraphical, and numismatic evidence supports Mommsen's case and shows that the Vandal kings employed various formulae to publicize their regnal years.

Before the Vandals came to Africa the inhabi-

<sup>64</sup>Cf. Sidon. *Carm.* 2, 5, and 7.

<sup>65</sup>See Vergil *Georgics* 2.109–176.

<sup>66</sup>Cf. *AL* 371.15. For similar sentiments see *Expositio* 61.

<sup>67</sup>Cf. *AL* 371.20–27. On Felix's view of the baths of Thrasamund, see *AL* 201–205. The title of *AL* 201 (*De thermis Alianarum*; cf. Bailey, *AL*, p. 150, ad loc.) leads me to reject the *Codex salmasianus*' reading *Alianas* in favor of the nominative plural *Alianae* at *AL* 371.20. Bailey (*AL*, p. 187, ad loc.) retains the manuscript reading at this point. On Carthage's north shore during the Vandal century, see Clover, *C Mich.*, VII, 7–8, 13–17.

<sup>68</sup>For these features of Vandal Carthage see Clover, *C Mich.*, VII, 1–22.

<sup>69</sup>Cf. *AL* 371.30, 36–39. At vs. 37 Florentinus uses the word *imperium* to describe the Vandal hegemony.

<sup>70</sup>See above, note 14.

<sup>71</sup>*CIC*, Nov. 47.

<sup>72</sup>T. Mommsen, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 8 vols. (Berlin, rpr. 1965), VI, 342–58.



1a. Aureus of Maximian. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Médailles, no. 1600 (photo: Bibliothèque Nationale)

1b. Aureus of Lucius Domitius Alexander. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Médailles, no. 1671 (photo: Bibliothèque Nationale)



2. Illustration of ND Occ. 18 in MS. Canon. Misc. 378, fol. 147r. Oxford, Bodleian Library (photo: Bodleian Library)





3a. Silver coin of Carthage, dated ANNO IIII K(ARTHAGINIS). Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Médailles, no. R/1652 (photo: Bibliothèque Nationale)



3b. Silver coin of Carthage, dated ANNO V K(ARTHAGINIS). Turin, Museo Civico (gift of Antonio Gariazzo) (photo: Museo Civico)



4. Silver coin of King Hildiric. Heberden Coin Room, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (photo: Ashmolean Museum)



5. Bronze coin of Carthage, valued at 42 nummi. Copenhagen, National Museum, Royal Collection of Coins and Medals (photo: National Museum)





6a. Fragment of the Byrsa Mosaic: standing female figure. Paris, Musée du Louvre, no. Ma 2999 (photo: M. Chuzeville)



6b. Fragment of the Byrsa Mosaic: horseman. Paris, Musée du Louvre, no. Ma 1789 (photo: M. Chuzeville)



6c. Fragment of the Byrsa Mosaic: the charioteer Quiriacus. Paris, Musée du Louvre, no. Ma 1788 (photo: M. Chuzeville)



7. Fragment of the Bordj-Djedid Mosaic: horseman. London, British Museum, acc. no. GR 1860. 10-2. 132 (photo: British Museum)



8a. Carthaginian gold quarter. New York, American Numismatic Society (photo: American Numismatic Society)



8b. Siculo-Punic silver tetradrachm. New York, American Numismatic Society (photo: American Numismatic Society)



8c. Siculo-Punic silver tetradrachm. New York, American Numismatic Society (photo: American Numismatic Society)

- 9a. Roman bronze lamp with a handle in the shape of a horse's head.  
London, British Museum, acc. no. GR 1814. 7-4. 200 (photo: British Museum)



- 9b. Roman bronze lamp with a handle in the shape of a horse's head.  
London, British Museum, acc. no. GR 1824. 4-54. 10 (photo: British Museum)



10. Terra-cotta lamp found at Damous el Karita, Carthage. Tunis, Musée du Bardo, inv. no. 632 (photo: Photothèque du Centre Camille Jullian, Aix-en-Provence)



11a. Bronze coin of Carthage, valued at 42 nummi. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum (photo: Fitzwilliam Museum)



11b. Bronze coin of Carthage, valued at 21 nummi. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum (photo: Fitzwilliam Museum)



12a. Bronze coin of Carthage with a horse's head reverse. Copenhagen, National Museum, Royal Collection of Coins and Medals (photo: National Museum)



12b. Bronze coin of King Hildiric with a Cross Potent reverse. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Médailles, Collection Schlumberger, no. 2, 232 (photo: Bibliothèque Nationale)

13. Bronze coin of Carthage with a palm tree reverse. Turin, Museo Civico, Reale Medagliere, no. 28436 (photo: Museo Civico)



14. Bronze coin of Rome with Wolf and Twins reverse, valued at 40 nummi. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Médailles, Ancien Fonds, no. 79 (photo: Bibliothèque Nationale)



- 15a. Silver coin of Carthage with VRBS-ROMA reverse. Washington, D.C., Dumbarton Oaks, acc. no. 48.17.3823 (photo: Dumbarton Oaks)



- 15b. Silver coin of Carthage with Victory reverse. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum (photo: Fitzwilliam Museum)



- 15c. Bronze coin of Carthage with Victory and the legend CARTAGINE P(ER)P(ETVA) on the reverse. London, British Museum (photo: British Museum)





16. Silver coin of Spain with a reverse bearing the name of the Suevic King Richari. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Médailles, no. E/2770 (photo: Bibliothèque Nationale)



- 17a. Solidus of Theodosius II with reverse celebrating the emperor's seventeenth consulate. Washington, D.C., Dumbarton Oaks, Fogg Art Museum acc. no. 1951.31.4/Whittemore loan no. 30 (photo: Dumbarton Oaks)



- 17b. Solidus of Theodosius II with reverse celebrating the emperor's eighteenth consulate. Washington, D.C., Dumbarton Oaks, acc. no. 62.73.2 (photo: Dumbarton Oaks)

tants of the provinces of Numidia, Africa Proconsularis, and Byzacium had abandoned the use of provincial and priestly eras in the third century. Thereafter they dated public documents by the names of the Roman consuls.<sup>73</sup> A funerary inscription of the so-called Basilica of Cyprian attests the use of consular dating at Carthage as late as 438 or 439.<sup>74</sup> After this the Vandals changed the practice of chronological reckoning in their realm. The *Computus carthaginiensis*, a paschal composition drawn up when Deogratias was bishop of Carthage (454–57), bears the formula *anno decimo regis Geiserici* or *anno sextodecimo regis*.<sup>75</sup> The fourth and fifth editions of the *Liber genealogus* (a Donatist assemblage of biblical pedigrees and Christian events, based on the *Chronicle* of Hippolytus) are dated *ad annum sextum decimum regis* and *ad* (or *in*) *annum vicesimum quartum regis Geiserici* respectively. The fifth edition of the *Liber genealogus* helps to locate these calculations in time. Fifty-eight years elapsed from the second consulate of Stilicho to the twenty-fourth year of King Geiseric; the year 463 came fifty-eight and twenty-four years after 405 and 439 respectively.<sup>76</sup> The *Laterculus regum wandalorum* confirms: Thrasamund, who reigned from 496 until 523, died in the eighty-fourth year “from the entry into Carthage.”<sup>77</sup> Again the year 439 emerges as a beginning point. The *Computus carthaginiensis* and *Liber genealogus* therefore show that as early as 455 inhabitants of Vandal Africa dated documents according to the regnal year of Geiseric, which indeed began on 19 October 439. The standard formula was *anno N regis Geiserici* (“in the year N of King Geiseric”). One funerary inscription of Sufetula in Byzacium bears the following concluding sentence: *natus anno XXVIII/ regis Geseric pridie idus/septembres*. It is unclear whether this indicates the date of birth or death of

the deceased.<sup>78</sup> In either case the literary sources discussed above render secure the use of Geiseric's name in dating formulae during his lifetime.

Geiseric's successors followed the practice of dating by regnal years. The preface to the *Notitia provinciarum et civitatum Africae* and documents inserted in Victor of Vita's history carry either full or abbreviated versions of the conventional phrase *anno N regis Hunirici*.<sup>79</sup> Gunthamund used more elaborate formulae. The *Tablettes Albertini* are dated *anno N domini* (or *domini nostri invictissimi*) *regis Gunthamundi*; Roman influence caused the king to adopt the imperial title *dominus noster* (“Our Master”).<sup>80</sup> The ostraka discovered near Bir Trough, Algeria, show that Gunthamund used another ingredient in dating documents: *anno N K* (or *C*) *artaginis domni nostri regis Gunthamundi*.<sup>81</sup> Because the king's name is present here, the Year of Carthage is an elaboration of a regnal formula rather than a municipal era. Thrasamund, Hildiric, and Geilamir followed the example of their predecessors. A manuscript from Caralis (Cagliari) in Sardinia and funerary inscriptions from Vandal Africa bear variants of the formula *anno N domini nostri regis* for all three reigns.<sup>82</sup>

The Eastern Romans used existing and new methods of dating when they took control of Africa. Justinian's edict of 537 set the stage for the adoption of some new chronological indicators. In general, engravers who flourished during the Eastern Roman occupation employed combinations of regnal years and indictions or indictions alone when they dated their inscriptions.<sup>83</sup> Eastern Roman coins of Carthage bear indiction dates intermittently. Justinianic coins are sometimes dated *anno N*, but the obverse legend removes ambiguity.<sup>84</sup> These coins and certain inscriptions whose engravers carved the indiction as an afterthought show that Africans were

<sup>73</sup> Cf. N. Duval, “Recherches sur la datation des inscriptions chrétiennes d'Afrique en dehors de la Maurétanie,” *Atti del Terzo Congresso Internazionale di Epigrafia Greca e Latina* (Rome, 1959), 245–62, at 245–49.

<sup>74</sup> *IC Sainte-Monique* 46.

<sup>75</sup> *Comp. carth.* 1.2, 5 and 2.4, 8 (ed. Krusch, pp. 279, 281, 287, 289). On Deogratias see *PCBE*, I, 271–73.

<sup>76</sup> *Lib. gen.* 428, 499, 627, and 628c (MGH, AA, IX, 181, 188, 196). On Stilicho's second consulate (405) see R. S. Bagnall and K. A. Worp, *The Chronological Systems of Byzantine Egypt* (Zutphen, 1978), 79. For the fourth and fifth editions of the *Liber genealogus* see P. Monceaux, *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne depuis les origines jusqu'à l'invasion arabe* (Paris, 1901–23), VI, 247–58.

<sup>77</sup> *Lat. reg. Wand.* 12–13 (MGH, AA, XIII, 459).

<sup>78</sup> *ILCV* 3477. Cf. N. Duval, “Trois notes sur les antiquités chrétiennes d'Haidra, l'ancienne Ammaedara (Tunisie),” *BAntFr* (1963), 44–68, at 60–68.

<sup>79</sup> *Not. prov., Praefatio*; and Vict. Vit. *HP* 2.39, 3.3–14.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. C. Courtois et al., *Tablettes Albertini: Actes privés de l'époque vandale* (Paris, 1952), 313–14. On the title *dominus noster* see above, notes 56–63.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. J. P. Bonnal and P. A. Février, “Ostraka de la région de Bir Trough,” *Bulletin d'archéologie algérienne* 2 (1966–67), 239–49.

<sup>82</sup> *Codex basilicanus* D.182, fol. 288 (CLA, I, 1a); *ILCV* 1385 and 4452; and *IC Haidra* 413, 419.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. Duval, “Recherches,” 250–52, 258–60; J. Durliat, “La lettre L dans les inscriptions byzantines d'Afrique,” *Byz* 49 (1979), 156–74; and N. Duval, “Comment distinguer les inscriptions byzantines d'Afrique?” *ibid.*, 51 (1981), 511–32.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. A. R. Bellinger, P. Grierson, et al., *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, 3 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1966–73), I, 164–69 and II, 1, 123–29; and C. Morrisson, *Catalogue des monnaies byzantines de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1970), I, 106–8.



at first slow to follow Justinian's order of 537.<sup>85</sup>

Sometime during the fifth or sixth century stonecutters and moneyers employed two methods of dating derived from the conventions noted above but omitted the name of the current monarch. One of these—for convenience it may be called Type A—is the simple phrase *anno N*. Inscriptions from Madauros, Aquae Caesaris, and Tubernuc in Africa Proconsularis are dated *anno tertio*, *anno VII*, and *anno XXXIII* respectively, while one epitaph of Leptis Minor in Byzacium bears the date *anno XXVIII*.<sup>86</sup> The second method of dating—Type B—involved the use of the Year of Carthage. The moneyers who struck silver coins with Emperor Honorius on the obverse and Lady Carthage on the reverse dated this briefly lived series ANNO IIII K(ARTHAGINIS) and ANNO V + K(ARTHAGINIS).<sup>87</sup> Engravers carved on two funerary monuments of Madauros and two markers found at Hippo Regius in Africa Proconsularis the dates *anno VI K(arthagini)s*, *an(no) VII Karthag(i)n(is)*, *anno XX Kartag(inis)*, and *anno XXIIII Kartaginis* respectively. Furthermore, an epitaph of Cuicul in Numidia bears the date *anno XXIIII K(arthaginis)*.<sup>88</sup>

The interpretation of these two methods of dating is a matter of considerable debate. In his Paris dissertation Christian Courtois took Type A to be a regnal year of Geiseric and regarded Type B as an Eastern Roman era marking the reconquest of 533.<sup>89</sup> In support of Courtois, Paul Albert Février has assigned the Cuicul example of Type B to the Byzantine period on the grounds that Cuicul stands beyond eastern Numidia, the westernmost limit of a concentration of physical remains which can be dated to the Vandal century.<sup>90</sup> This attribution founders on indications that after 455 the Vandals imposed at least intermittent control over portions

of Numidia and the Mauretanas.<sup>91</sup> Part of Courtois' reconstruction may therefore be rejected: there is no evidence that the Year of Carthage was in use during the Eastern Roman occupation of Africa. The interpretation of Noël Duval—the product of a systematic analysis of methods of dating in Numidia, Africa Proconsularis, and Byzacium—stands closer to the epigraphical and numismatic testimony assembled here. Duval has argued that Types A and B are interchangeable and that they both signify regnal years of Geiseric; only after Geiseric died did it become necessary to specify the name of the Vandal king.<sup>92</sup> Duval's case is not perfect. It involves a controversial interpretation of the epitaph of Sufetula, which records that the deceased "was born in the twenty-eighth year of King Geiseric."<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, the *Computus carthaginensis* and the fourth and fifth editions of the *Liber genealogus* demonstrate that Geiseric's subjects used the royal name and title to date documents during his reign.<sup>94</sup> Finally, Duval's reconstruction does not make sufficient allowance for inconsistencies of local stonecutters. It is safer to begin a test of Duval's argument with the supposition that Type A may record regnal years of any of the Vandal kings and—in view of indications that Africans were slow to begin dating by indiction<sup>95</sup>—of Justinian I. The absence of Type B from the roster of Byzantine dating formulae restricts the search for the origin and nature of this convention. The Bir Trough ostraka demonstrate that the Year of Carthage was in use during the reign of King Gunthamund (484–96).<sup>96</sup> If one allows for the possibilities that Gunthamund did not invent the formula and that his successors followed his example, then Type B could have been in use from the reign of Geiseric to that of Geilamir. Can one be more precise than this?

Of the two conventions, Type A (with examples dated by the years 3, 7, 29, and 33) is the more cryptic. Early in this century Otto Seeck suggested a means of narrowing down the number of reigns during which the surviving examples could have been inscribed. All monarchs from Geiseric to Jus-

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Y. Duval, *Loca sanctorum Africae: Le culte des martyrs en Afrique du IV<sup>e</sup> au VII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 2 vols., Collection de l'Ecole Française de Rome, 58 (Rome, 1982), I, 138–42, no. 64.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. E. Albertini, "Quelques inscriptions de Madaure," *Bulletin archéologique du Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques* (1930–31), 247–55, at 253, no. 13; *ILA*, I, 2959; *ILT* 819; and *ILCV* 3139.

<sup>87</sup> See above, note 11.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. *ILCV* 1387, 1457, 1601A; E. Marec, "Epitaphe chrétienne d'époque byzantine trouvée aux environs d'Hippone," *Libya: Archéologie-épigraphie* 3 (1955), 163–66 = *AE* (1956), 125; and P. A. Février, "Inscriptions chrétiennes de Djemila (Cicul)," *Bulletin d'archéologie algérienne* 1 (1962–65), 207–26, at 214–22 = *AE* (1967), 596.

<sup>89</sup> C. Courtois, *Les Vandales et l'Afrique* (Paris, 1955), 369, 373, 375, 379.

<sup>90</sup> Février, "Inscriptions," 214–22. Cf. Courtois, *Vandales*, 171–85.

<sup>91</sup> See Vict. Vit. *HP* 1.13, 2.14; Prisc. frag. 27 (ed. Bornmann, p. 89); W. H. C. Frend's review of Courtois' *Vandales*, *JRS* 46 (1956), 161–66, at 165; and A. Chastagnol and N. Duval, "Les survivances du culte impérial dans l'Afrique du Nord à l'époque vandale," *Mélanges d'histoire ancienne offerts à William Seston* (Paris, 1974), 87–118, at 88–94.

<sup>92</sup> Duval, "Recherches," esp. 252–56.

<sup>93</sup> See above, note 78.

<sup>94</sup> See above, notes 75–76.

<sup>95</sup> See above, note 85.

<sup>96</sup> See above, note 81.



tinian I reigned three years, and all but Geilamir enjoyed seven years in power. Only Geiseric and Justinian I, however, ruled for twenty-nine and thirty-three years.<sup>97</sup> Therefore the four epitaphs that represent Type A may date from Geiseric's reign, as Duval has argued. Indeed, Type A's formula (*anno N*) stands close to *anno N regis* (without the king's name), a convention that the *Computus carthaginiensis* and the *Liber genealogus* used on occasion.<sup>98</sup> The application of Seeck's method to Type B, however, yields less clear-cut results. The coins and inscriptions representing Type B are dated in the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, twentieth, and twenty-fourth Years of Carthage. Once again, the greater number of years is a guide. Of all the Vandal kings, only Geiseric and Thrasamund reigned more than twenty or twenty-four years. At least one of these two monarchs shared with Gunthamund the use of the Year of Carthage, but the stoncutters who inscribed epitaphs in his (or their) twentieth and twenty-fourth years omitted the royal name. Furthermore, one Vandal king (not Geilamir, who reigned for three years) issued silver coinage during his fourth and fifth years.<sup>99</sup> Was Gunthamund the first Vandal king to introduce the Year of Carthage as an elaboration of regnal dating, or did he follow the example set by one of his predecessors?

Of the surviving attestations of Type B, only the silver coins minted in the name of Emperor Honorius are susceptible to further analysis. During Gunthamund's reign the mint of Carthage began to issue silver coinage with the king's name. Thrasamund, Hildiric, and Geilamir followed suit.<sup>100</sup> It is unthinkable that Gunthamund or his successors would have inaugurated an imperial imitation after the commencement of royal silver. Therefore the Honorius silver dates from no later than the fourth and fifth years of Gunthamund's reign (487/89). The reign of Honorius (393–423) sets the terminus post quem; the series began in 396/98 or later. Within the past generation critics have assigned these issues to Count Gildo (who rebelled against the Western Roman Empire in 397–98) and to the fourth and fifth regnal years of Huniric or Gun-

thamund (480/82 or 487/89).<sup>101</sup> None of these dates can be proved beyond doubt to be correct. Nevertheless, it is possible to give credence to Baron Marchant's suggestion that Geiseric inaugurated the Year of Carthage in the fourth and fifth years of his reign.<sup>102</sup>

The first step in a modern exegesis of Baron Marchant's conjecture is to bring to view once again the full regnal formula utilized on the Bir Trough ostraka: *anno N Karthaginis domini nostri regis Gunthamundi*.<sup>103</sup> There is both tradition and innovation in this assemblage of conventions. Gunthamund was the first Vandal monarch to adopt the imperial title *dominus noster*,<sup>104</sup> but other usages were in place before he became king. Geiseric was the first ruler to take the royal title (*rex*) and to order documents to be dated *anno N*. The *Computus carthaginiensis* and *Liber genealogus* demonstrate that he took these measures no later than A.D. 455;<sup>105</sup> the Byzantine chronicler Theophanes suggests that he did so soon after he and his soldiers captured Carthage in 439.<sup>106</sup> These considerations raise the possibility that the two methods of regnal dating, *anno N* and *anno N Karthaginis*, both originated during Geiseric's reign.

In an essay on the use of coinage for reconstructing events, A. H. M. Jones argues that modern critics have been too assiduous in detecting political motives for issuing money and have thus been less attentive to economic reasons. Ancient minting authorities wanted first of all to have their coins circulate; political messages (in the form of badges and mottoes) were of secondary importance.<sup>107</sup> Jones' approach to ancient coinage contributes in a general manner to the dating of the Honorius silver: it appeared during or soon after the reign

<sup>101</sup> Cf. C. Courtois, "Les monnaies de Gildo," *RN*, ser. 5, 16 (1954), 71–77; and Morisson, "Origines" (above, note 11), 468–70.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. C. Lenormant et al., eds., *Lettres du Baron Marchant sur la numismatique et l'histoire*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1851), 184–88.

<sup>103</sup> See above, note 81.

<sup>104</sup> See above, notes 58 and 63.

<sup>105</sup> See above, notes 75–78.

<sup>106</sup> Theoph. *Chron.* 5941 (ed. de Boor, I, 101), s.aa. 448/49 but recounting events that happened immediately after the Vandals captured Carthage. Since Geiseric became the leader of his people as early as A.D. 428 (cf. Hydat. *Chron.* 89), Theophanes must be describing Geiseric's appropriation of the title *rex*. Before 439 Geiseric probably held another form of chieftainship. On the complexities of early Germanic leadership and the resulting names for high magistracies, see J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship in England and on the Continent* (Oxford, 1971), 1–20.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. A. H. M. Jones and P. A. Brunt, *The Roman Economy: Studies in Ancient Economic and Administrative History* (Oxford, 1974), 61–81.

<sup>97</sup> O. Seeck, *Geschichte des Untergangs der antiken Welt*, 6 vols. (Stuttgart, 1897–1921), VI, 330 and 477. On the number of years the Vandal kings and Justinian I reigned, see Courtois, *Vandales*, 405–9; and *PLRE*, II, 645–48.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. *Comp. carth.* 1.5, 2.8 (ed. Krusch, pp. 281, 289); and *Lib. gen.* 499 (MGH, AA, IX, 188).

<sup>99</sup> See above, notes 11 and 88.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. *BMC Vand.*, pp. 8–16.

of Honorius, when that emperor's currency enjoyed widespread circulation. It is interesting to note that the silver series under discussion is not the only western provincial issue (beyond the pale of imperial coinage) to bear the name of Honorius. Two other silver types merit attention. The first of these, clearly minted at Carthage, is in two denominations. The more valuable of the two bears the inscription and bust of Honorius on the obverse, while the reverse displays a seated Roma and the legend VRBS ROMA. The obverse of the fraction is the same, while its reverse bears a Winged Victory and the motto VICTORIA AVG(VSTI) or VICTORIA AVG(VSTORVM) (Figs. 15a, 15b).<sup>108</sup> The second series originated in northwestern Spain, in the lands of the Suevi. The familiar bust and inscription of Honorius appear on the obverse, and the reverse carries the unusual legend IVSSV RICHARI REGES ("at the orders of King Richari") (Fig. 16).<sup>109</sup> The first of these two series is more difficult to date, and discussion of it must therefore be postponed. The second issue, however, can be dated between A.D. 448 and 455, the years during which Richari was king of the Suevi.<sup>110</sup> The Richari silver, a regnal currency, appeared soon after the death of Honorius. The Honorius-*anno Karthaginis* silver is also regnal coinage. Did it too come into circulation around the middle of the fifth century?

If one calculates the dates on the Honorius-*anno Karthaginis* silver—the fourth and fifth Years of Carthage—from the known beginning of Geiseric's rule as king (19 October 439), one places this silver issue in the years 443/44 and 444/45. If this chronology is accepted, then it appears that Geiseric began using regnal years as a dating convention soon after his troops took Carthage. From what source might he have obtained the idea of a regnal year? Egypt, always a great influence on Roman Africa, had used the formula "the year N of Emperor N" since the beginning of the Dominate. From the late fourth century until the reign of Justinian I, however, regnal dating fell into disuse there.<sup>111</sup> Egypt is therefore not a likely source for

the Year of Carthage. Instead an imperial inspiration may be sought. In the 440s the Eastern Emperor Theodosius II ordered the production of two unusual solidi. The obverse of the first showed a facing portrait of the emperor in military dress, while the reverse carried a seated female figure (Constantinopolis?) and the legend IMP(ERATORE) XXXXII CO(N)S(VLE) XVII P(ER)P(ETVO). The second type displayed on the obverse a left-facing bust of the emperor in consular robe and on the reverse the emperor seated on a throne and the motto IMP(ERATORE) XXXXIII CO(N)S(VLE) XVIII. The double dating in each case shows that the two issues appeared in 443 and 445 respectively. The use of a single imperial year prefaced by the title *imperator* was a departure from prevailing custom; ordinarily emperors of the fifth century marked their years of rule on coinage with quinquennial or decennial *vota* (Figs. 17a, 17b).<sup>112</sup> The original occasion for this brief departure from tradition was perhaps Theodosius' celebrated *expeditio Asiana*, a festal procession through the municipalities of Asia Minor in 443.<sup>113</sup> The unusual commemorations of this event might well have influenced Geiseric's decision to date silver coinage of Carthage by his own regnal years.

The present reconstruction is only a working hypothesis. It encounters apparent difficulty in the Honorius-VRBS ROMA silver noted above. The recent catalogue and analysis of Cécile Morrisson and James Schwartz have established beyond doubt that this extensive series was the work of the mint of Carthage and that it antedated the more spare and derivative Honorius-*anno Karthaginis* silver.<sup>114</sup> Since the British Museum catalogue appeared around the turn of this century, it has become common to attribute both series to the Vandals; Morrisson and Schwartz adopt this standard reconstruction.<sup>115</sup> If Geiseric ordered the mint of Carthage to strike the Year of Carthage silver in 443/45, he would have been hard pressed to bring the VRBS ROMA silver into production between 439 and 443, the years during which he and his people fought to retain the newly won metropolis of Roman Africa. The obstacle presented here,

<sup>108</sup> See C. Morrisson and J. H. Schwartz, "Vandal Silver Coinage in the Name of Honorius," *ANSMN* 27 (1982), 149–79.

<sup>109</sup> See X. Barral i Altet, *La circulation des monnaies suèves et visigotiques* (Munich, 1976), 51. In transcribing the king's name I have followed E. Förstemann, *Altdeutsches Namenbuch*, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Bonn, 1900–16), I, 1264–65; and H. Kaufmann, *Ernst Förstemann: Altdeutsche Personennamen*, *Ergänzungsband* (Münich-Hildesheim, 1968), 289–90.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. *PLRE*, II, 935.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. R. S. Bagnall and K. A. Worp, *Regnal Formulas in Byzantine Egypt*, *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists*, Suppl. 2 (Missoula, Mont., 1979), 42–44.

<sup>112</sup> See Boyce, *Festal and Dated Coins* (above, note 60), 40–90 (esp. 73) and 99, nos. 116–18.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. J. P. C. Kent, "Gold Coinage in the Later Roman Empire," *Essays in Roman Coinage Presented to Harold Mattingly*, ed. R. A. G. Carson and C. H. V. Sutherland (Oxford, 1956), 190–204, at 202–3.

<sup>114</sup> See above, note 108.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. *BMC Vand.*, pp. 2 and 5.

however, is not insuperable. In general terms, the two issues of silver from Carthage belong to the same span of time: the VRBS ROMA series came into production during or after the reign of Honorius (393–423) and no later than the early years of King Gunthamund. Morrisson and Schwartz have demonstrated that this silver issue dates from the fifth century, but I believe the decision to attribute it to the Vandals is open to question. Between ca. 390 and 430 the mint of Carthage enjoyed a brief spate of activity. At present modern critics assign only a series of small bronzes characterized by an ambiguous obverse (DOMINO NOSTRO, DOMINIS NOSTRIS, or DOMINIS NOSTRIS P[ER]P[ETVVIS] AVG[VSTIS]—all without the imperial names) and a variety of reverses (including some salutations of Carthage) to this period (Fig. 15c).<sup>116</sup> Yet a comparison of some imperial portraits in this series with some of those of the Honorius-VRBS ROMA silver reveals similarities: on Dumbarton Oaks and British Museum specimens of each issue, for instance, the pellet-shaped eyes and angular nose of the emperor resemble one another.<sup>117</sup> In light of these comparisons one can suggest that a single authority ordered the mint of Carthage to issue full and fractional silver in Honorius' name and small bronzes without the name(s) of the emperor(s). Who would have issued such an order? On the strength of the ambiguity of the legend DOMINO NOSTRO (etc.), modern critics have posited a dissident count of Africa as the inspiration of the small bronzes of Carthage. Count Gildo and Count Boniface (*rebellabant* 397–98 and ca. 422–29 respectively) are the favorite candidates.<sup>118</sup> Boniface is the more likely candidate of the two, for he remained at odds with parts of the imperial government for a longer time. Indeed, if one assigns to him the Honorius-VRBS ROMA silver, then both an economic and a political motive for the series comes to view: Boniface circulated coinage in the name of an emperor whose currency was common, and he advertised his well-known loyalty to the western branch of the house of Theodosius after

Honorius died in 423 and the bureaucrat John usurped the western throne (423–25).<sup>119</sup>

The common date for the Honorius-VRBS ROMA series, then, rests on uncertain ground and does not spell doom for Baron Marchant's suggestion that Geiseric ordered the mint of Carthage to strike silver during the fourth and fifth years of his kingship. By the present reconstruction Geiseric had both economic and political motives for placing Honorius' name and portrait on the obverse of his currency: Count Boniface had minted coinage in that emperor's name and the new ruler of Carthage was not so secure that he could release money in his own name. Nevertheless, Geiseric did make bold to call himself king, and he dated this silver issue by his own years of reign. The beginning of the Vandal monarchy at Carthage and the commencement of the Vandal regnal year, it seems, are coterminous.<sup>120</sup>

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#### Abbreviations:

- AL D. R. Shackleton Bailey, ed., *Anthologia latina*, I: *Carmina in codicibus scripta*; Fasc. 1: *Libri salmasiani aliorumque carmina* (Stuttgart, 1983)
- BMC Vand. W. Wroth, ed., *Catalogue of the Coins of the Vandals, Ostrogoths and Lombards and of the Empires of Thessalonica, Nicaea and Trebizond in the British Museum* (London, 1911)
- CLA E. A. Lowe, *Codices latini antiquiores: A Palaeographical Guide to Latin Manuscripts prior to the Ninth Century*, 12 vols. (Oxford, 1934–71)
- C Mich. J. H. Humphrey, ed., *Excavations at Carthage Conducted by the University of Michigan*, several vols. (Tunis and Ann Arbor, 1976–)
- Comp. carth. B. Krusch, ed., *Computus carthaginiensis sive de ratione Paschae*, in *Studien zur christlich-mittelalterlichen Chronologie: Der 84-jährige Ostercyclus und seine Quellen* (Leipzig, 1880), 279–97
- Drac. Sat. F. Speranza, ed., *Blossi Aemili Draconti Satisfactio, una cum Eugeni recensione* (Rome, 1978)
- Expositio J. Rougé, ed., *Expositio totius mundi et gentium*, SC 124 (Paris, 1966)
- Hydat. Chron. A. Tranoy, ed., *Hydace: Chronique*, 2 vols., SC 218–19 (Paris, 1974)
- IC Haidra N. Duval and F. Prévot, eds., *Recherches archéologiques à Haidra*, I: *Les inscriptions chrétiennes*, Collection de l'Ecole Française de Rome 18 (Rome, 1975)
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<sup>116</sup>Cf. *LRBC*, p. 58, nos. 576–580. In 1970 I examined the specimen described in *LRBC*, p. 58, no. 580 (now in the possession of a private collector in Paris) at A. H. Baldwin and Son, London, and I offer here a reading of the obverse inscription which differs from that of the editors of *LRBC*.

<sup>117</sup>Cf. Figs. 15a and 15c. Cf. Morrisson and Schwartz, "Vandal Silver Coinage," 161–62.

<sup>118</sup>Cf. *LRBC*, p. 58, nos. 576–580; and R. Turcan, "Trésors monétaires trouvés à Tipasa: La circulation du bronze en Afrique romaine et vandale aux Ve et VIe siècles ap. J.-C.," *Libya: Archéologie-épigraphie* 9 (1961), 201–57, esp. 208–12 and 216.

<sup>119</sup>On the career of Count Boniface see F. M. Clover, "The Pseudo-Boniface and the *Historia Augusta*," *Bonner Historia-Augusta-Colloquium 1977/78* (Bonn, 1980), 73–95; and *PLRE*, II, 237–40.

<sup>120</sup>I owe the present reconstruction to conversations with Noël Duval and Philip Grierson. On the relation between Theodosius II's dated solidi and the dated silver of Spain and Carthage, see P. Grierson and M. Blackburn, *Medieval European Coinage* (forthcoming).

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